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### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1vm7x0q2>

### Journal

Journal of the American Oriental Society, 139(2)

### ISSN

0003-0279

### Author

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### Publication Date

2019

### DOI

10.7817/jameroriesoci.139.2.0397

Peer reviewed

# Authority and Auspiciousness in Gaurana's *Lakṣaṇadīpikā*

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Moving beyond poetry's affective and semantic powers, south Indian rubrics of poetic analysis often examined poetry's metaphysical dimensions. The poeticians of the Telugu country developed an especially rich body of work in this field, elaborating an analysis of auspiciousness in poetry and classifying minor genres of praise poetry called *cāṭuprabandha* wherein auspiciousness was particularly important. This article focuses on one witness to that tradition, the *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* of Gaurana (fl. ca. 1375–1445 CE). Previous scholars have cited the *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* as exemplifying this particular strand of thinking in poetics in Andhra and contiguous regions. This paper concentrates on the metaphysical evaluation of poetry offered in the *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* as a way of detailing its sources and its place in the history of Sanskrit poetics more generally. Gaurana's work is shown here to constitute an attempt at revising and reinforcing this analytical method by linking it to wider Sanskritic traditions of scholarship and ritual, specifically tantra and astrology. Ultimately, the paper argues that Gaurana's project was meant to support a larger social argument for brahmanical prerogatives in the domain of poetic work.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the introduction to his Telugu long poem the *Navanāthacaritramu* (*Deeds of the Nine Nāths*) Gaurana (fl. 1375–1445 CE) describes how he came to compose the text and extols his own virtues in the process. He recounts how the work's patron Muktiśānta, lord of Srisailem's Bhikṣāvṛtti maṭha, decided whom he should call to compose the Nāths' tale. Chief among Muktiśānta's concerns were the poet's qualifications: Who, he wondered, was “well-practiced . . . in judging the properties of tasteful *rasa*-filled literature” (*sarasasāhityalakṣaṇavivekamulan . . . alavaḍḍa vāṁḍu*)?<sup>1</sup> This praise might simply seem clichéd. Through the alliterative *sa-rasa-sāhitya*, for instance, Gaurana invokes the concept of *rasa*, which had long been deemed an indispensable feature of poetry and which—owing to the influence of Kashmiri poeticians—had helped to constitute the prevailing paradigm in Sanskritic poetics. What poet then would not claim to infuse a poem with *rasa*?

But more important in this praise, I would suggest, is the word *lakṣaṇa*—‘property’, ‘characteristic’, or by extension any ‘rule’ or ‘definition’ based on such a feature. From this perspective, *rasa* is just one in a battery of other *lakṣaṇas* that poetry should have in order to appeal to the discerning literary elite. Scholars of Sanskritic poetics had enumerated and posited many such features. Aside from defining the discipline's namesake *alaṃkāras* (rhetorical ornaments or figures of speech), *alaṃkāraśāstra* also maintained thematics, characterology, narrative structure, and generic form among its core concerns. More to the point,

An early draft of this paper was presented at the 44th Annual Conference on South Asia (2015) as part of the panel “Trust the Texts? Canon, Authority, and the Making of Vernacular Literary Histories.” I thank all those in attendance for their comments. I am also indebted to Whitney Cox, Velcheru Narayana Rao, Stephanie Jamison, and two anonymous reviewers for the *Journal* for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this paper. All remaining errors and inadequacies are my own.

1. Gaurana, *Navanāthacaritradvipadakāvyamu*, 1.

being educated in poetics and related linguistic disciplines—especially metrics, dramaturgy, and grammar—was a qualification that few poets would disavow. Such learning, then, was not so much exceptional as to be expected.

Still, stereotyped though it may be, Muktiśānta's commendation indexes more tangible traces of Gaurana's erudition and more unexpected senses of *lakṣaṇa*. Not just a poet, Gaurana was also a poetician. In this latter capacity, he was the author of two non-identical Sanskrit works—each available in a single manuscript, both bearing the title *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* (*A Light on the Properties*).<sup>2</sup> The *lakṣaṇas* that Gaurana illuminates here are not, however, the many definitions of the myriad rhetorical ornaments. Rather, he is generally unconcerned with the usual subjects of Sanskrit poetics. He barely considers matters of meaning. He does not care to consider what makes poetry poetry, or what makes it interesting or beautiful or generally pleasing to the mind and ear. Nor does he care to reflect much on the concept of *rasa* to which he nods in his Telugu work. The poeticians' *lakṣaṇa* notwithstanding, his use of the term stands much closer to the *lakṣaṇa* of divination—that is to say, the tellingly auspicious or inauspicious mark on an animal, object, or person. And so, just as a diviner claims the power to descry an entity's fate by reading marks on its body, Gaurana's work promises to elucidate those characteristics of literary composition that can anticipate and actualize both favorable and unfavorable outcomes for the patrons and performers of poetry.

In taking up this issue, Gaurana's *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* (LD) belongs to what David Shulman has dubbed the "Andhra alaṅkāra school."<sup>3</sup> From at least the early fourteenth century, the poeticians of this school had begun to delineate the *lakṣaṇas* of auspicious composition. While earlier Sanskrit poeticians typically analyzed poetry to the level of the word or utterance, the Andhra poeticians developed rubrics for analyzing the metaphysical properties of poetic language's basic components—the phoneme (Sanskrit *varṇa*) and the metreme (Sanskrit *gaṇa*). They understood these linguistic units to have deep affinities with divine energies that structure reality. Thus when reciting a poem, to utter a word—or even a few unmeaningful sounds—could be to invoke great and potentially perilous powers, especially when beginning a work. Lest danger ensue, a poet must—with the help of the poeticians' insight into these *lakṣaṇas*—be sure that his work's opening sounds are auspicious. Just as they developed this auspicious analysis, the Andhra poeticians had also begun to describe new literary forms, which Gaurana calls *cāṭuprabandhas*. These forms were relatively short, multi-stanza, quasi-musical panegyrics in a mixture of prose (*gadya*) and verse (*padya*). Their panegyric character, it seems, made auspiciousness of the utmost importance. Stories of poetry's awesome power abound from at least the fourteenth century. A poet could lay waste to kings and kingdoms or make the same thrive with a well-placed (or even misspoken) syllable. It was to understand these linguistic powers that the Andhra poeticians posed their fine-grained analysis.

While Gaurana is an early proponent of this analysis of literary auspiciousness, he did not invent it. Rife with quotations, the very texture of the *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* might suggest that we are dealing with a derivative work, at best a useful digest of earlier texts. However, as I will show in what follows, Gaurana has not merely reproduced received opinion in his LD.

2. These are (1) D. 1494, GOML Chennai; (2) D. 12952, GOML Chennai. Throughout this article I will draw on these two works almost indiscriminately. Earlier scholars—chief among them Sarasvati Mohan—saw them as two discrete albeit similarly themed works. Others, as Mohan reports, have found reason to doubt that Gaurana composed both works. See Sarasvati Mohan, "Gaurana and His Sanskrit Works," 4. My contention, which diverges from both of these perspectives, is that D. 12952 is likely a supplement (part commentary, part revision with additions) to D. 1494. Thus for the purposes of my argument I treat them as constituting a single project, if not a single text.

3. David Shulman, "Notes on Camatkāra," 259.

More than this, he offers a purposeful and novel synthesis wherein he brings together and hierarchizes a wide range of materials. He primarily draws on poetry and poetics, often from the Andhra school. But—and by all accounts unlike his poetological predecessors and successors—Gaurana takes explicit recourse to authoritative texts on ritual and astrology.

In what follows, I will analyze how Gaurana synthesizes these materials: What topics are at issue? What principles govern his inclusion or exclusion of certain texts and what relationships (such as relative importance, priority, or subordination) does he forge between them? And why should astrological and ritual authorities end up as the bedrock of his project? As an opening proposition, I would suggest that as an early member of the Andhra school Gaurana seeks to ground what was an unstable body of poetic knowledge in the Telugu country. Gaurana works to resituate the Andhra school's decidedly literary precepts in a framework outside of literary or linguistic *śāstra*. Ultimately, Gaurana not only redefines what constitutes poetic knowledge but also what it means to be a poet. To describe Gaurana's intervention more precisely, the next section will trace the discourse on auspiciousness in *alaṃkāraśāstra* and highlight the peculiar project of the Andhra school and Gaurana. From there I will detail how Gaurana hierarchizes his sources to construct a coherent system on auspiciousness in poetry. This section and the conclusion will show that Gaurana's revision of the auspicious analysis is driven by a ritual understanding of poetic practice that drives him to redefine the class of poets itself.

## 2. THE POETICS OF AUSPICIOUSNESS IN ANDHRA

Most works in Sanskrit poetics show a concern for auspiciousness in one of two ways. First, they propose that any poetic enterprise should begin with a *maṅgala* verse so that the poets might complete their work and so that their audiences might understand and enjoy it.<sup>4</sup> A seminal example is available from Daṇḍin's *Kāvyādarśa* 1.14, which stipulates that a work may properly begin with a benediction, an obeisance, or some indication of the subject matter (*āśīrnamaskriyā vastunirdeśo vāpi tanmukham*). Second, the body of the work should be generally auspicious. So, poets should avoid even inadvertently inauspicious meanings (*amaṅgalārtha*); from Vāmana's *Kāvyālaṅkāra* onward, such usages are basically categorized as a variety of distasteful or offensive (*aśīla*) diction.<sup>5</sup> In both cases poeticians focus on the semantic powers of language—first the power to invoke and communicate with deities, second the power and problem of intentional and accidental reference.

The Andhra school shares these same anxieties, but it goes further, beyond language's capacity for meaning to the powers of generally meaningless phonemes and metremes. As Shulman characterizes it, the Andhra school ultimately recognizes a “dense grid of sonic waves and energies that, while bearing their own inherently positive or negative charges, interact decisively with one another, with various divine presences, and with context, intention, velocity, density, volume, and other determining factors that shift and transform.”<sup>6</sup> In this, its poeticians add a new area of analysis to the normal considerations of beauty, pleasure, and rhetorical ornamentation.

While Gaurana's *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* is not the first work to pursue this analysis of auspiciousness, the unique intensity with which he engages the school's concerns is on display in the opening of his work, where he lays out his project's syllabus:

4. Christopher Minkowski, “Why Should We Read the Maṅgala Verses?” 10.

5. *Kāvyālaṃkārasūtravṛtti* 2.1.20. For an expanded discussion on the same paradigm, see *Camatkāracandrikā* 1.39–41.

6. Shulman, “Notes on Camatkāra,” 271.

[1] The origin of the phonemes, their manifestation, and their number; [2] their planets and elemental seed; [3] their proper and improper usage and the distinction between harsh and pleasing phonemes; [4] precepts about their use and their powers (felicitous and infelicitous); [5] the names of the metremes; [6] their presiding deities, their planets, and their powers; [7] the compatibility and incompatibility of the metremes; [8] their signs according to the sidereal zodiac and tropical zodiac; [9] consideration of the ambrosial periods and the strength of planetary influence; [10] the method of worshipping the Mother deities; and [11] the characteristics of authors, patrons, literary compositions.<sup>7</sup>

As this table of contents reveals, Gaurana is almost completely silent on traditional matters of meaning. He speaks not of a composition's being beautiful, interesting, or pleasing; nor does he speak much about language's capacity for communication or representation. Instead he addresses those powers of language that precede any of the recognizable semantic operations. This is clear from his treatment of *rasa*, which comprises a strikingly brief nine verses.<sup>8</sup> Here he communicates the essential information on the *rasas*—what they are and which are compatible or incompatible with which. Beyond this, he only enumerates their presiding deities (*adhidevatās*) and the colors (*varṇas*) associated with them. Though quoting almost verbatim from Amṛtānandayogin's *Alaṅkārasaṅgraha*, Gaurana presents only a fifth of what Amṛtānandayogin offers and an even smaller fraction of what one can find on *rasa* in other works of poetics. Gaurana himself speaks to this explicitly when he alludes to the many varieties of the *rasa* of passion (*śṛṅgāra*) by saying that these are elaborated elsewhere by those “who are learned precisely in the discipline [of *rasa*]” (*tacchāstrakovidaiḥ*). Thus, as he says, *rasa* is important: “However well made it may be, he goes on to say, an utterance without *rasa* is as tasteless as a dish without salt” (*sādhupākam anāsvādyam bhojyam nirlavaṇam yathā tathaiva nīrasam vākyam*). Nevertheless, Gaurana seems to identify the study of things like *rasa* as a distinct field of knowledge. Such inattention to ordinary aesthetics and its affective and semantic dimensions is typical of his work.

In large part, Gaurana and the Andhra school's special interest in auspiciousness would have had its roots in the forms of poetry that occupied their attention. These are what Gaurana and most other Andhra poeticians call *cāṭuprabandhas*. In south Indian literary culture, *cāṭu* popularly refers to verses that circulate orally and are accompanied by stories that explain the circumstances of their utterance.<sup>9</sup> But these *cāṭus* are distinct from the Andhra school's *cāṭuprabandhas*, which are poems with a prosimetrical shape and encomiastic character. Gaurana manifests this panegyric orientation when he emphasizes that poetry in general and *cāṭuprabandha* in particular “should give results such as fame and therefore should be free of stain” (*kāvyaṃ kīrtyādīphaladam syāt tato doṣavarjitam*), and that the proper subjects of these compositions should be persons like gods, brahmans, gurus, kings, vassals, and ministers.<sup>10</sup>

Further, as panegyrics *cāṭuprabandhas* are considered to be particularly powerful. The definition of the *udāharaṇa*, the archetypical *cāṭuprabandha*, shows this clearly. Its stylistic form and the content of the work are wholly oriented towards representing and praising an

7. D. 1494 fol. 23a, ll. 4–6. : *varṇānām udbhavaḥ paścād vyaktisaṃkhyātataḥ param | bhūtabijavicāraś ca tato varṇagrahāv api || anarhānahavedhaś ca rūkṣasniḡdhavicāraṇā | prayoganirṇayas teṣām śubhāśubhaphalāni ca || gaṇānām cābhīdhānāni svarūpāṇy adhidevatāḥ | varṇabhedagrahās tatra śubhāśubhaphalāni ca || mitrāmītravicāraś ca nakṣatrāṇi ca rāśayaḥ | mṛtavelāgrahāvasthāmātrkāpūjanakramah || kartuḥ kārayituś caiva prabandhānām ca lakṣaṇam |*

8. D. 1494 fols. 30b, l. 5 - 31a, l. 4.

9. David Shulman and Velcheru Narayana Rao, *A Poem at the Right Moment*, 135–37.

10. D. 1494 fols. 31a, l. 4; 33a, l. 3.

eminent—if not royal—subject. And, more importantly, this form is imbued with a metaphysical content. Structurally it consists of nine sections, each in turn consisting of a verse and short paragraph of metered prose. Grammatically, each section is committed to one of the eight declensions (*vibhaktis*) identified by Sanskrit grammar, and praises its eminent subject with long sequences of nominal compounds. Thus, the compounds describing the subject in the first section are all declined in the first case (the nominative), in the second section the second case (accusative), and so on; the ninth section is called the *sārvavibhaktika* verse and contains noun phrases declined in each of the cases.<sup>11</sup> With this structure, according to Gaurana's predecessor Amṛtānandayogin, the work is understood to propitiate *vibhaktidevatās*, the goddesses that preside over the declensions. Exalting and exemplifying these grammatical/divine entities in this way is understood to be auspicious for the similarly exemplified and exalted subject. Specifically, Amṛtānandayogin says, "the divinities that preside over the declensions—whom the wise call *Virājanī* (Radiance), *Kīrtimatī* (Fame), *Subhāgā* (Prosperity), *Bhogamālinī* (She who wears the garland of pleasure), *Kalāvati* (Artistry), *Kāntimatī* (Glamour), *Kamalā* (Wealth), *Jayavatī* (Victory)—give a gift that corresponds to their name when pleased by this praise."<sup>12</sup>

Such poetry can thus bring about wonderful results. But, the Andhra poeticians caution, it can just as well have dire consequences. It is with this concern that Gaurana explicitly frames his work, offering four verses (three quotations, one original) that voice his project's rationale:

"If a poet should utter a verse without knowing all of this [i.e., the metaphysical properties of language],

like a monkey up a Ketaka tree he would be all pierced through with thorns."

Similarly, it is said in *The Crown-jewel of Literature*:

"He who knows neither all the meters nor their properties, and yet still writes prose and verse—he is the Death of kings."

And in *Moonlight on Astonishment*:

"If even a single fault is seen, a myriad of observances are wasted.

Such is the innate power of faults. So, what are we to do?"

And my very own:

"With an intellect adept in the deed of designing amazing poesy a wise and ambitious man should avoid faults like poison."<sup>13</sup>

The verses all make the same claim: Understanding these properties of literary language and avoiding infelicitous usage are critical for the maintenance of one's life and livelihood. As the first quotation suggests, the poet himself is imperiled by reckless usage. Further, as the second quotation and Gaurana's own verse argue, royal personages (presumably insofar as they are the patrons of literature) find their own wealth and well-being imperiled by poets who are untutored in such material. Anecdotal evidence of this state of affairs seems to

11. Ibid., fols. 32b, l. 4 - 33a, l. 3.

12. *Alaṅkārasaṅgraha* 11.13–14: *virājanī kīrtimatī subhāgā bhogamālinī | kalāvati kāntimatī kamalā jayavatī || etā vibhaktiyadhiṣṭhātryo devatāḥ kathitā budhaiḥ | dadatyetāḥ stutiprītāḥ svasvanāmasamaṃ phalam ||*

13. D. 1494 fols. 23a, l. 6 - 23b, l. 2: *etat sarvam avijñāya yadi padyam vadet kaviḥ | ketakārūḍhakapivat bhavet kaṇṭakaved- hitaḥ || ṃ ca sāhityacūdāmaṇau | anekachandasām samyag ajñātvā lakṣaṇāni ca | karoti gadyapadyāni prabhūṇām mṛtyur eva saḥ || camatkāracandrikāyām | ekasminn api naṣṭam syād drṣṭe doṣe vratāyutam | doṣasyaitavati śaktiḥ sahaḥ ṃ nu kurmahe || mamaiva | tasmād viśmayakāraṇakavitānirmāṇakar-makuśaladhīyā | sudhīyā viśavat tyājyo nāyakarājyābhilāṣinā doṣaḥ ||*

have circulated in Andhra well into the nineteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Some premodern metrical treatises even exemplify these laws with verses attributed to preternaturally powerful poets. For example, in his Telugu *Lakṣaṇaśiromaṇi* (Crest-jewel of rulebooks, ca. 1750 CE), Pōttapai Veṅkaṭaramaṇakavi exemplifies a rule governing the inauspicious placement of phonemes by citing a verse—attributed to the notorious Dread Poet Vemulavāḍa Bhīmakavi—which allegedly caused the royal patron’s ruin.<sup>15</sup>

This level of concern is a significant departure from the approach generally available in *alaṃkāraśāstra* from Daṇḍin onward. Where an auspicious *maṅgala* benediction was once an option alongside other incipits,<sup>16</sup> for the Andhra school it is a requirement. At the same time, the auspicious beginning is no longer just about propitiating gods for the removal of obstacles to the poet’s composition and the audience’s understanding, as commentators often explain. The Andhra school does come to demand that poets should propitiate deities known as the *mātrkāś* (the mothers or phoneme goddesses) at the start of any work. However, this practice—called *mātrkāpūjā*—diverges from the wider practice of reciting a *maṅgala* verse in crucial ways. For one, even though *maṅgala* verses may be predictable, poets do have a great deal of room for innovation. The Andhra poeticians, on the other hand, come to stipulate a fixed ritual visualization (*dhyāna*) as part of the *mātrkāpūjā*. Second, while both practices are expressly for an auspicious beginning, the literary *maṅgala* verse is also meant to ensure that the work be well understood and generally well received in the world. The *mātrkāpūjā* of the Andhra school, on the other hand, is primarily meant to satisfy the larger demand to negotiate the elemental and potentially perilous powers associated with language. Poetry then, according to the Andhra school, is a serious business demanding great precision on the part of the poet.

Given this anxiety, what does the Andhra analysis look like? Typically it consists of two lists under the rubric of *gaṇavarṇaśubhāśubhaphala* (the auspicious and inauspicious outcomes of phonemes and metremes). Consider first Gaurana’s presentation of the phonemes:

The definitions should be like so: *a* is the deity of everything, red is its color, it has power over everything. *ā*: *Parāśakti*, white, attraction. *i*: *Viṣṇu*, dark, protection. *ī*: *Mayāśakti*, tawny, and control over women. *u*: *Vāstu*, dark, and control over kings. *ū*: the Earth, dark, and control over kings. *ṛ*: Brahma, yellow, mastery of the celestial objects. *ṝ*: *Śikhaṇḍirūpa*, dark, destroys fever. *l* and *ḷ*: the *Aśvins*, white and red, destroy fever. *e*: *Virabhadra*, yellow, grants all aims.<sup>17</sup> *anusvara*: *Maheśa*, red, gives contentment. *visarga*: *Kālarudra*, red, severs the bonds [of existence?]. *ka*: *Prajāpati*, yellow, livelihood. *kha*, *ga*, and *gha* give glory, but *ṇa* infamy. *ca* and *cha* give delight and comfort respectively. *ja* brings sons. Danger and death come from *jha* and *ṇa*. *ṭa* and *ṭha* are of hardship and discomfort. Glamour and inglamorousness from *ḍa* and *dha* respectively. Confusion from *ṇa*. *ta* and *tha* make war. *da* and *dha* give comfort. *na* vexes. Danger, comfort, death, difficulty, and vexation: These are the respective products of the labials [*pa*, *pha*,

14. See, for example, Gurajada Apparao, *Kanyāśulkam*, 113. The Telugu play—habitually cited as a representative text of colonial reform movements in southern India—features the character Polīśētti fretting over a verse extemporaneously sung on his behalf. Finding the composition inauspicious, he cries out: “Stop, stop, stop! Or do you plan to kill me with that rhyme?” (*vōddu, vōddu, vōddu! pāsaṃ pēṭṭi saṃpeṣṭāvā?*).

15. *Lakṣaṇaśiromaṇi* 1.121–22.

16. Giuliano Boccali, “The Incipits of Classical Sargabandhas,” 188.

17. The list quoted above leaves out three of the vowel sounds (*o*, and the diphthongs *ai* and *au*). However, because Gaurana elsewhere acknowledges sixteen vowels, this seems to be a problem of the manuscript record. It may be that the other complex vowels have simply been grouped with *e*, the first of their order. Viśveśvara gives a precedent for this at *Camatkāracandrikā* 1.21cd: “The set of four starting with *e* give pleasure, speech, liberation, and prosperity” (*ekārādyāś ca catvāraḥ kāmavāṇmoksābhūtīdāḥ*).



*ba, bha, ma*]. *ya* gives glory; *ra* gives pain; *la* and *va* bring affliction. *śa* brings comfort, *ṣa* hardship, and *sa* bestows comfort. *ha* causes pain. *ḷa* bestows affliction. *kṣa* produces prosperity.<sup>18</sup>

A few features of the analysis demand attention here. First, it is quite schematic: For each phoneme is stipulated some power or effect. This manner of organizing the material is common to all members of the Andhra school. Examples rarely punctuate these basic definitions. Second, the poeticians' schemas do not always agree in their particulars. Gaurana remarks upon this explicitly: After giving the schema quoted above, he quotes in full a slightly different list given in the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi* (Crest-jewel of Literature), which has been attributed to the Rēḍḍi king Pēḍakomaṭi Vemā (r. 1402–1420 CE). One poetician might identify a phoneme as being positively charged while another might mark the very same entity as hazardous. Gaurana, for instance, says that *ṇa* results in infamy, while the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi* says it brings prosperity. Furthermore, Gaurana's treatment of the vowel sounds (Sanskrit *svaras*) is altogether more robust than what we find in other texts from Andhra *alaṅkāraśāstra*: Each vowel (and the first consonant, *ka*) is given its own divinity (*daivatyaṃ*) and color in addition to some commonly stipulated outcome (*phala*). And as we will see below, more fundamental differences are apparent insofar as schemas differ even in the number of phonemes they postulate.

These phoneme lists are always accompanied by an equally schematic presentation of the metremes or *gaṇas*. For his, Gaurana cites Viśveśvara's *Camatkāracandrikā*:

The *ma*-metreme—all heavy syllables, the Earth its divinity—gives security.  
 The *ya*-metreme—light in the first syllable, Water its divinity—makes wealth.  
 The *ra*-metreme—light in the middle, Fire its divinity—bestows prosperity.  
 The *sa*-metreme—heavy at the end, Wind its divinity—causes destruction.  
 The *ta*-metreme—light at the end, Sky its divinity—gives prosperity.  
 The *ja*-metreme—heavy in the middle, the Sun its divinity—causes pain.  
 The *bha*-metreme—heavy at the beginning, the Moon its divinity—bestows comfort.<sup>19</sup>

Aside from detailing their material consequences, the poeticians grant each metreme an elemental deity. These divine associations remain fixed throughout the tradition. However, as in the case of the phonemes, the poeticians may disagree about whether a metreme will produce a positive or negative outcome.

Still, the powers of phonemes and metremes are not entirely static. Combination and meaning can modulate a poetic element's inherent properties. For instance, *a* is positive, unless it is used in a compound in its negative sense. The same can be said for *ā* (which can

18. D. 1494 fols. 24b, l. 6 - 25a, l. 6: *etal lakṣaṇaṃ bhavet | akāraṃ sarvadaivatyaṃ raktaṃ sarvavaśikaraṃ | ākāraḥ syāt parāśaktiḥ śve- tam ākarṣaṇaṃ bhavet | ikāraṃ viṣṇudaivatyaṃ śyāmaṃ rakṣākaraṃ paraṃ | māyāśaktir iti [?]taṃ pītaṃ strīṇāṃ vaśikaraṃ | ukāro vāstudaivatyaḥ kṛṣṇo rājavaśakaraḥ. . . | ūkāraṃ bhūmidaivatyaṃ śyāmaṃ rājavaśikaraṃ | ṛkāraṃ brahmāṇo jñeyaṃ pītaṃ grahamiśanaṃ śikhāṃdirūpaṃ ṛkāraṃ aṃjanaṃ jvāranāśanaṃ | aśvinībhyāṃ lūlū cobhau sitaraktau jvarāpahau | ekāraṃ vīrabhadraṃ syāt pītaṃ sarvārthasiddhidāṃ | amkāraṃ tu maheśaṃ syāt raktavarṇaṃ sukhapradāṃ | aḥkāraṃ kālarudraṃ ca raktaṃ pāśanikṛtīṇā | prajāpatyaḥ kakāraḥ syāt pīto vṛttiprādayakaḥ | caturbhyaḥ kādivarṇebhyo lakṣmīr apayaśas tu ṇā | pritisaukhye cachau putralābho jo bhayaṃṛtyudau | jhaṇau taṭhau khedadukhe śobhāśobhākaraḥ ḍaḍhau | bhramaṇaṃ ṇād api tathau syād yudhyāt sukhadau dadhau | naḥ pratāpī bhītisaukhyamaraṇakleśatāpakṛt | pavargo yas tu lakṣmīdo ro dāhaṃ vyasanaṃ lavau | śaḥ śukhaṃ tanute śas tu khedaṃ sas sukhadāyakaḥ | ho dāhakṛd vyasanaḍo laḥ kṣas sarvasamṛddhikṛt |*

19. D. 1494 fols. 26b, l. 6 - 27a, l. 1: *kṣemaṃ sarvagurur dhatte magaṇo bhūmidaivataḥ | karoty arthān ādilaghur yagaṇo jaladaivataḥ | (bhūti)dāyī madhyalaghū ragaṇo vaṃhnidaivataḥ | kṣayaṃ karoty aṃtyagurus sagaṇo vāyudaivataḥ | bhū(tim) aṃtyalaghur dhatte tagaṇo vyomadaivataḥ | rūjākaro madhyagurur jagano bhānudaivataḥ | ādau gurus saukhyadāyī bhagaṇaś caṃdradaivataḥ |* Gaurana's citation omits the *na*-metreme. But we find it in *Camatkāracandrikā* 1.35cd: "The *na*-metreme—all light syllables, the sacrifice its divinity—produces wealth" (*dhananīkaraḥ sarvalaghur nagaṇo yajñadaivataḥ*).



represent a plaintive or angry cry) and *n*, the consonantal core of the negative particle *na*. On the other hand, inauspicious sound sequences can become auspicious when they combine to denote something auspicious, such as a deity. Gaurana makes this plain by presenting a short series of maxims from other poetological treatises. For example, he cites Viśveśvara: “When referring to auspicious things or mentioning gods, metremes and phonemes—like stones imbued with divinity—cannot be faulted” (*maṅgalārthābhidāne ca devānām aṅkane 'pi vā, gaṇā na duṣyā varṇāś ca devatādhiṣṭhitāśmavat*).<sup>20</sup> That is to say, any malefic properties established in the raw material can be ameliorated if the sound or sound sequence manifests something auspicious through its referential powers.

Initial sounds and sound sequences in poetry have become here objective facts, and their inherent properties can be subverted precisely through their capacity for meaning. Viśveśvara’s simile is telling in that it points to the transmutation of a mundane object (here a stone) through certain procedures of installation (*adhiṣṭhāna*), as indicated by the phrase “imbued with divinity” (*devatādhiṣṭhita*). In this way poetic language is framed in ritual terms in the Andhra school.

### 3. SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

Andhra’s auspicious analysis is then predictable in its basic form and interests if not necessarily stable in the particulars. As noted above, Gaurana actually highlights the differences in opinion within the school, setting his view against that of the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*. But Gaurana goes on to suggest that the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*’s analysis is not merely different but dubious, saying “here and there it conveys what I have said. Even so, the absence of an understanding between [the two lists]—that can be overlooked, since it [the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*] lacks a proper foundation” (*ity anena kvacit kvacit asmaduktārthaḥ pratiyate | tad apy amūlatvāt parasparāvijñānaṃ upekṣaṇīyaṃ* |).<sup>21</sup> The rival text appears to be problematic because it lacks a properly authoritative basis (*amūlatvāt*). Thus, though Gaurana had other—and earlier—works on poetics at hand, the authority of these works was apparently debatable.

It is this instability and a corresponding demand for precision that seem to determine the scope of Gaurana’s project. For most of the Andhra poeticians, the analysis stops with the phoneme and metreme lists (items 3 through 6 in the syllabus detailed above). But if we recall Gaurana’s plan for the *Lakṣaṇadīpikā*, we see that his presentation of the phonemes, metremes, and their consequences is but a fraction of the material. The lists are preceded by remedial discussions of what these entities are, and they are succeeded by a series of more advanced discussions that build upon the basic schema and detail how metrical elements are combined to different effects. In this, Gaurana appears to address the problem of baseless authority. By expanding the scope of the analysis, Gaurana seems to be building—or, perhaps more accurately, shoring up—the system. Throughout his project, Gaurana turns to two sources outside of poetics: *mantraśāstra* and astrology (*jyotiḥśāstra*). The following sections will work through the ways that Gaurana uses these in his argument. In the first, I will show the place of *mantraśāstra* in Gaurana’s remedial investigation of the phonemes and their metaphysics. Next, I will move up a level to Gaurana’s analysis of metremes, their combinations, and his use of *jyotiḥśāstra*. Finally, I will turn to the ways that Gaurana pushes beyond *śāstra* to the authority of exceptional poetic practitioners.

20. *Camatkāracandrikā* 1.42

21. D. 1494 fol. 25b, ll. 4–5.

### 3.1. The nature of phonemes and mantraśāstra as a model

The phonemic analysis cited above would seem to bear the influence of tantra and its subfield *mantraśāstra*, the study of verbal formulas (mantras) used in tantric ritual. On the whole, tantric works elaborate a complex metaphysics where sonic energies emanate from the divine to constitute the fabric of the universe as we (should) know it. The critical importance of sound and speech are predictably apparent in *mantraśāstra*. The field's texts build upon this metaphysics and concern themselves especially with its practical application in constructing ritually efficacious verbal formulas: Here the power of mantra is not semantic—neither does it force, nor does it beseech a deity to act; rather, its power is rooted in the way sound pervades all of reality, such that there is no separation between language, the human, and the divine.<sup>22</sup> The proper construction and application of mantras simply makes manifest the divine powers that inhere in sound. Thus the digests of *mantraśāstra* stipulate not just the phonemes' affinities with various divine powers but also general prerequisites and procedures for using mantras, instructions for particular mantras, and instructions for visualization rituals (*dhyāna*). Earlier studies of the Andhra school have noted the similarities between the tantric and the poetic and attempted to draw more precise connections. David Shulman, for instance, compares Viśveśvara's analysis in the *Camatkāracandrikā* to a similar phoneme-by-phoneme list produced by Abhinavagupta in the *Tantrāloka*.<sup>23</sup> Earlier work by Sarasvatī Mohan also notes the similarity between the tantric analysis and Andhra's poetics, going so far as to present extracts from poetological treatises side-by-side with extracts from tantric works.

More than this, however, Mohan argues for explicit continuities between the two traditions, with Gaurana functioning as an apparent nexus.<sup>24</sup> But Mohan's claim—that the system of the Andhra school is indebted to the researches of the tantric school—requires qualification. The tantric materials and those of the Andhra certainly share a formal shape. But even if a general relation to tantric modes of thought can be presumed, no direct links are apparent and the tantra-inflected analysis of phonemes and metremes occupies distinct sections of most works from the Andhra *ālaṃkārikas*. The case of Gaurana illustrates the limits of Andhra *ālaṃkāraśāstra*'s use of *mantraśāstra*. Despite the robust descriptions of the powers of phonemes available in *mantraśāstra* manuals, Gaurana does not directly appropriate these sections in his auspicious analysis. Rather, he draws on *mantraśāstra* in only two places: first in the sections leading up to the standard auspicious analysis and second for the fundamentals of propitiating the *mātrkāś*.

While most treatises from Andhra contain only the auspicious analysis, the LD begins not with that analysis itself but with a remedial discussion of the phonemes. It is here that Gaurana first harkens to non-poetological texts of tantra. In particular, he references two works—the *Śāradātilaka* (*The Forehead-mark of Śāradā*) of Lakṣmaṇadeśika and the *Prapañcasāra* (*The Essence of the Emanation*) attributed to Śaṅkarācārya—both of which exemplify the field of *mantraśāstra*. Gaurana deploys these works to set the poetic system on a proper foundation by defining the phonemes, the fundamental elements of language and literature. Where do these phonemes come from? What are they made of? How many are there? Gaurana stands out in the Andhra school for spending nearly twenty verses answering these questions before giving his version of the standard phonemic analysis. The explanation describes how sounds are physically produced; but, in much greater detail, it describes the phonemes' metaphysical

22. Patton E. Burchett, "The 'Magical' Language of Mantra," 831.

23. Shulman, "Notes on Camatkāra," 258–60.

24. Sarasvatī Mohan, "Introduction," in *The Camatkāracandrikā of Śrī Viśveśvara Kavicaṇḍra*, 72–73.

character. For Gaurana, *mantraśāstra*'s comprehensive and systematic treatment of the matter offers a necessary and well-wrought foundation for any subsequent poetic analysis.

The recourse to *mantraśāstra* is exemplified by Gaurana's first two points: on the phonemes' origin (*varṇodbhava*) and manifestation (*varṇavyakti*). Initially, poetological texts seem to have some standing insofar as their linguistics assumes the metaphysics of tantra. When discussing the phonemes' origin, Gaurana first cites the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*, which explains that the "cause of their birth [is] Śiva—the divine god who is the *bindu*—joined with his female counterpart" (*vadanti vibudhās sarve varṇāṇām janmakāraṇam śivayā saha divyaṃ taṃ devaṃ bindvātmakaṃ śivam*).<sup>25</sup> The references to Śiva, the *bindu* ("singularity" or "drop"), Śiva's female counterpart (*Śivā*), and the phonemes' descending from these are commonplaces in tantra's linguistic metaphysics. As Padoux translated the cosmogony presented in the *Śāradātilaka*, from Śiva, "the supreme Lord, . . . was born the [phonic] energy [*śakti*]. Out of that came the *nāda* and out of *nāda*, *bindu*, which is a manifestation of the supreme energy, and which itself divides into three"; from the tripartite *bindu* (viz., *bindu*, *nāda*, *bīja*) comes *śabdabrahman*, which takes the shape of the *kuṇḍalini*; thence come the phonemes, then speech; then the gods, the elements, and the whole phenomenal world.<sup>26</sup> The only difference seems to be the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*'s reference to *Śivā* where the ŚT speaks of *śakti* or Śiva's "[phonic] energy," which is grammatically and conceptually figured as female.

Gaurana ultimately accepts the view of the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*. Nevertheless, he appears to find it wanting because the sequence of its analysis diverges from the tantric description. Gaurana follows the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi* excerpt with a half-line of verse from *Śāradātilaka* 1.113: "the phonemes are born from the *bindu*, which consists of Śiva and Śakti" (*jātā varṇā yato bindoḥ śivaśaktimayād atah*). Here he effectively glosses the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*'s "female counterpart" or *Śivā* with Śakti, the female manifestation of the god Śiva's generative power. Further, in citing the *Śāradātilaka* Gaurana is not just glossing the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi* but correcting it. The *bindu* is not, strictly speaking, made up of Śiva alone (*bindvātmakaṃ śivam*). As the *Śāradātilaka* has it, the *bindu* is that stage of the emanation constituted by Śiva who is still conjoined with Śakti; it is only in later stages that the two divide (and thus unleash the previously latent *śakti*).<sup>27</sup>

*Mantraśāstra*'s pre-eminence, alongside the relative status of his two sources, becomes even more evident as Gaurana determines the number of actually existing phonemes (*varṇasaṃkhyā*).<sup>28</sup> The controversy stems from competing accounts in his two *mantraśāstra* authorities. The opinion of the ŚT—that the phonemes are fifty-one—is the first to be adduced. Next come opinions from poetics and grammar: the number forty-nine from *Camatkāracandrikā*; sixty-three or sixty-four (from Śaṃbu by way of a *Tribhāṣyaratnākara*).<sup>29</sup> These are proposed but summarily ignored. In the end, Gaurana must bring the authority of the PS to bear on the issue. His judgment revolves around the status of the retroflex *ḷa* and the conjunct *kṣa*. On the first account, the difference between the dental *la* and the retroflex *ḷa* is dissolved at the metaphysical level: He argues that they must have been born of the same phonemic deity (*mātrkā*), since the retroflex is not said to have one of its own (*laḷayor*

25. D. 1494 fol. 23b, ll. 2–3.

26. André Padoux, *Vāc*, 87.

27. Ibid., 106.

28. Quotations follow D. 1494 fols. 23b, l. 5–24a, l. 3.

29. *Camatkāracandrikā* omits the retroflex *ḷa*. The augmented number of sixty-three (or numerologically significant sixty-four) presumably comes from the addition of *jihvāmūliya*, *upadhmāṇiya*, and a number of transitional or weakly articulated forms. See Padoux, *Vāc*, 161–62.

*abhedah antarmātrkāyām lakāśyānuktatvāc ca*). Nonetheless, he finds a way to save the retroflex *la* by acknowledging that there are fifty-one *akṣaras* or graphemes, even if there are only fifty metaphysically significant *varṇas* or phonemes.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, some do not count the conjunct *kṣa* since it can be divided into its constituent parts, *ka* and *ṣa*. Gaurana, for his part, marshals *mantraśāstra* authorities to maintain *kṣa* as a discrete phoneme. Namely, the PS recognizes *kṣa* as a conjunct, but ascribes to it an appropriately conjunct deity—the man-lion avatar of Viṣṇu (*kṣakāras tena saṃjāto nṛsiṃhas tasya devatā*). Having given this pronouncement, Gaurana also cites two further works, the *Mantradarpaṇa*<sup>31</sup> and the poetological *Kavikaṇṭhapāśa*, to corroborate his decision. But these just add volume to the chorus. Beyond the argument grounded in the number of phonemic deities, Gaurana's judgment is conclusively ratified by the authority of its teacher: "There are fifty phonemes," he concludes, "precisely because this is what was taught by Śaṅkarācārya" (*śaṅkarācāryena pāṛthakyenoktatvāt tasmād varṇāḥ pañcāśad eva*). Thus, not only does the PS explain the metaphysical rudiments of the system, but there is also a hierarchy among the tantric texts, one seemingly based in the relative authority of their authors.

That said, Gaurana does not merely appeal to the authority of *mantraśāstra*. He also tries to emulate the structure of its analysis. On the whole, *mantraśāstra* more fully explicates the qualities of each *varṇa*, describing more than just the fruits of their use. As we have seen in the case of the conjunct consonant *kṣa*, the PS stipulates a deity (*devatā*) for each syllable. What is more, as the fourth chapter of the PS details, syllables may each be individually connected to celestial bodies, an explicitly feminine generative power (*śakti*), and some color (*varṇa*). Gaurana's peculiarly robust analysis of the vowels—wherein he stipulates not just the power but also color and divinity of each sound—takes this same form. And so, having documented (with appropriate citations) the metaphysical presuppositions of a systematic phonemic analysis, Gaurana presents the phonemes' attributes with the same precision as *mantraśāstra*, if not the same content.

*Mantraśāstra*'s model status persists in later sections on the *mātrkāpūjana* that Gaurana prescribes as a preliminary to any literary recitation. The core of this procedure appears to be *dhyaṇa* or ritual visualization of a *mātrkā*.<sup>32</sup> Gaurana offers four elaborate *gadya* passages for the precise visualization of the *mātrkā*s of brahmans, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, and sūdras respectively. But he finds it necessary to turn to *mantraśāstra* for issues of fundamental ritual method. Citing ŚT 6.12–15, he describes the basic procedures for honoring a *mātrkā*—namely that such a deity should be borne on a throne whose base is the "lotus of phonemes" (*varṇābjenāsanam dadhyād mūrtim mūlena kalpayet āvāhya pūjayet tasyām devīm āvaraṇais saha*). Gaurana then goes further and draws on PS 7.7 to specify the exact dimensions and formation of this phonemic lotus. To worship the *mātrkā*s without taking into account these basic procedures, he says, amounts to a fault (*evam akaraṇe doṣaḥ*).<sup>33</sup>

30. The use of *akṣara* in the sense of "grapheme" is common in Kannaḍa materials from the tenth century on. See Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men*, 307–9.

31. This is the only time Gaurana cites *Mantradarpaṇa*, suggesting that it is less authoritative than the ŚT and PS.

32. D.12952 fols. 50–55. Sources for these *dhyaṇas* are not entirely forthcoming. Gaurana cites a *Nidhipradīpikā* for the *dhyaṇas* articulated in prose. These same passages are available in the eighteenth-century Telugu manuals. See *Ānandarāṅgarāṭchandaṃ* 2.269–87 and *Lakṣaṇaśiromaṇi* 1.35, 110, 134, and 139. Both texts, perhaps under the influence of Gaurana's work, cite a *Nidhipradīpikā* or *Siddhapradīpikā*. The *mātrkā*s described do not correspond to any of the common lists of eight *mātrkā*s or names of the goddess, nor do they correspond to the *mātrkā*s named in the PS or ŚT. Gaurana also cites earlier works (*Sāhityacandrodaya*, *Sāhityacūdāmaṇi*, and *Sāhityaratnākara*) that declare the necessity of the *mātrkāpūjana*; however, it is not clear whether these works prescribe specific procedures for doing so.

33. D. 1494 fols. 29b, l. 5–30a, l. 2.

Thus, while poetological texts dictated the necessity for the auspicious analysis of phonemes, only *mantraśāstra* could provide for Gaurana the necessary theoretical foundations for understanding the phonemes' metaphysical and ritual entailments. The only content that tantra determines is the number of phonemic elements. Beyond that, but no less crucially, it stipulates the framework for understanding these elements, their attributes, and methods for propitiating them.

### 3.2. Astrological authorities in the analysis of metremes

The dictates of *mantraśāstra* carry less weight, however, when Gaurana moves to the metreme. One reason may be that, more than the phoneme, the metreme is a unit particular to versification. A second and related reason is that some form of the metreme analysis predates the Andhra materials and seems to have been available in Sanskrit *saṃgītaśāstra*. Indeed, Gaurana's contemporaries and immediate predecessors seem to have already presented a particularly robust analysis of the metremes' properties. So, for example, Gaurana cites another poetological text—this time the *Sāhityaratnākara*, a work of the Andhra school—on the metaphysical origins of the metreme deities, which are forms of Śiva (*gaṇadevatā sāhityaratnākare—bhūjalāgnimarudvyomasūryasomātkasaṃjñikāḥ mūrtayaḥ śaṅkarasyāṣṭau gaṇānām devatāḥ smṛtāḥ*).<sup>34</sup> For this much at least, poetics was sufficient. What is more, Gaurana's immediate predecessors—*Sāhityacūdāmaṇi*, *Sāhityaratnākara*, and *Sāhityacandrodaya*—attribute further associations to the metremes, namely colors (*varṇa*), planets (*graha*), and sidereal and tropical zodiac signs (*nakṣatra*, *rāśi*) for each metreme.

Yet the presentation of these other attributes belies the apparent precedence of poetic *śāstra*: Poetics does not always determine the logic that governs these advanced associations. The question Gaurana raises to introduce the metremes' colors alludes to the possibility that another, non-poetic framework must be introduced. He does not begin by asking, “What are the colors of the metremes?” (*gaṇānām ke varṇāḥ*), but rather “The metremes have the color of which things?” (*keṣāṃ varṇāḥ*).<sup>35</sup> The question reveals that before specifying the colors of the metremes it is necessary to specify the grounds on which these colors can be specified in the first place. To provide such background, Gaurana cites the *Sāhityacūdāmaṇi*, which declares that “the colors of the metremes are just the colors of their presiding deities” (*svasvādhidevatānām ye varṇās te ceti viśrutā*). In this case, poetics has stipulated a framework for generating further attributes. But Gaurana shows that the rules for applying this framework often reside under the jurisdiction of non-literary texts.

Colors and deities aside, the properties have a distinctly astrological character, with the metremes subsisting under the influence of planetary and zodiacal bodies. For this reason, Gaurana turns to both astrology and poetics, albeit to different ends.<sup>36</sup> To open up the discussion of the metremes' planets, Gaurana does have at his disposal a poetic text—this time the *Sāhityaratnākara*: “Intelligent men say that the metremes of Fire, Earth, Sky, Water, and Wind correspond to the list of planets starting with Mars” (*vahnikṣmākhāmbumarutāṃ vadanti manīṣiṇaḥ gaṇān bhaumādīkān tattatgaṇānām ca yathākramam*). As we saw with *mantraśāstra* and the phonemes, Gaurana here uses astrology to reinforce the poetological statement. In this case, he uses the *Brhājñātaka* (The Big Book on Nativities), Varāhamihira's seminal fourth-century astrological compendium: “As [it says] in the *Brhājñātaka*: ‘For the groups associated with Fire, Earth, Sky, Water, and Wind, the lords are, in order, [the plan-

34. D.1494 fol. 26a, l. 5.

35. Ibid.

36. Quotations for this paragraph follow D. 1494 fol. 26b, ll. 2–4.



ets] beginning with Mars'" (*śikhibhūkḥapayomarutganāṇām adhipā bhūmisutādayaḥ*). The *Bṛhajjātaka* reference here grounds the equivalencies set out in the *Sāhityaratnākara*. The reference to an older attestation of the two sets (elemental and planetary) serves to make the implicit framework explicit. Nonetheless, an ellipsis remains. The list of elemental deities omits the Sun and the Moon, which preside over the *ja*-metreme and *bha*-metreme respectively. Gaurana notes this and explains that the *ja*-metreme and *bha*-metreme are omitted because they already have planetary correspondences in their deities—the Sun and the Moon (*jagaṇabhagaṇau* [. . .] *nijādhidevatāgrahau*). This time, however, he cites the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*, which gives the list of planets—Sun and Moon inclusive—to go along with the metremes. Here the reference provides the requisite exhaustiveness. Presumably the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi* could not have been used alone since the ordering of its list follows the poetic ordering. Its metreme list starts—as most metreme list are wont to do—with the *ma*-metreme,<sup>37</sup> which has Earth as its divinity and Mercury as its planet (*mayarasatajabhagaṇāṇām budhakavikujasaurijivaravicandrāḥ*). Subsequently, even though its list of planets covers more than that of the *Bṛhajjātaka*, its manner of sequencing—and thus establishing correspondences—does not fully adhere to astrological precedent.

But when it comes to resolving true discrepancies, it is precisely astrology's system that becomes most consequential. So much is borne out when Gaurana elaborates upon the implications of using metremes in certain combinations. His base text for defining the metremes is the *Camatkāracandrikā*. Yet Gaurana here considers each metreme in turn, with an eye toward the neutralization of inherently inauspicious metremes and the evaluation of conflicting poetological assertions. The most problematic case in this regard is the *bha*-metreme, which has the Moon as its presiding deity and planet. Viśveśvara describes the *bha*-metreme as bestowing comfort (*saukhyadāyī*). But Gaurana finds a dissenting opinion in the *Sāhityacandrodaya*, which claims that "When a dim-witted poet uses it at the start of a prose or verse poem, the *bha*-metreme—black on account of the Moon—spells the end for the poem's patron" (*kavinā gadyapadyāḍau prayukto mūḍhacetāsā kṛtānto bhagaṇo bhartuḥ kṛṣṇavarṇiniśākare*). This view from the *Sāhityaratnākara* is completely recast by Gaurana, who explains that the Moon's qualities are inherently mutable:

Tradition has it that the Moon is dark in color; but it has been well established that it consists of water. As Varāhamihira says: "While the Moon, which is made of water [. . .]" [And] water is actually transparent in color. . . . As a crystal is red in the presence of the China Rose, so does the Moon's color depend on the influence of this-or-that conditioning factor. As it is said in the *Samhitāsāra*: "The Moon's color depends on the influence of this-or-that conditioning factor. Red, yellow, white, and dark: these are the four colors of the Moon. The colors of the Moon are produced by the colors of the [other] planets."

Therefore, the Moon's being black in color is actually possible; [and] a black Moon is fatal. Even this statement is made according to the very same text [i.e., *Samhitāsāra*]: "When there's a red Moon, war. When it's dark, death—no doubt. When it's yellow, there's good fortune. When it's white, the most auspicious circumstances." Thus does the Moon-governed *bha*-metreme bestow fruit in accordance to its color.<sup>38</sup>

37. For instance, Gaurana cites the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*, which itself follows *Vṛttaratnākara* 1.6ab.

38. D. 1494 fols. 28a, l. 3–28b, l. 1: *nanu candraḥ kṛṣṇavarṇa ity aitihiyām | salilātmaka iti prasiddhaḥ | tathā varāhamihiraḥ | salilamayā śaśini* [. . .] *| salilasya śuklarūpatvam eva |* [. . .] *tathā | japākusumāsāṃmidhyāt sphaṭikasya raktateti | śaśini ca tattadupādhipaśāt tattadrūpatā vidyata eva | tathā samhitāsāre | śanaiścaraḥ tattadupādhipaśāt tattadrūpatā vidyata eva | raktam pītam sitam kṛṣṇam candravarnacatuṣṭayam | grahavarṇena varṇāś ca śaśāṅkasya prajāyate | tasmāc candrakṛṣṇavarṇatvaṃ sambhavaty eva kṛṣṇacandro mṛtyukṛt | etad apy uktaṃ yathā tasmim eva | raktacandre bhaved yuddham kṛṣṇe mṛtyur na saṃśaya | pīte śubham vijāniyāt śvete śubhataraṃ bhavet | iti candrādhiṣṭhito bhagaṇaḥ tattadvarṇānūrūpaphalaṃ dadāti ||*



The discussion is concluded with a reference to the *Sāhityaratnākara* (unfortunately damaged in the manuscript), which seems to explain that given the reflective character of the Moon relative to the other planets, the *bha*-metreme also takes on properties of the metreme that follows it. While Gaurana employs the poetological text to render his conclusion absolutely clear, he relies on exposition from Varāhamihira and the *Samhitāsāra*<sup>39</sup> to make his case. Gaurana presents two conflicting but equally traditional pieces of wisdom regarding the Moon's properties. On the one hand, he labels the *Sāhityaratnākara*'s view as traditional wisdom or *aitihya*, while on the other hand, he notes an equally well-established or *prasiddha* view that the Moon consists of water. Because these two views seem to be equally valid, Gaurana must in the end resort to a more rigorous method.

By citing Varāhamihira and the *Samhitāsāra*, Gaurana reproduces the work of these texts in order to establish the basic properties of the Moon as well as any further attributes that these entail. In this case, Gaurana does not throw out what he identifies as traditional views, but he does show them to be incomplete insofar as they lack the requisite background of astrological research. And while the Moon's reflective color makes it and the *bha*-metreme special cases, this case nonetheless exemplifies a general principle: The celestial bodies can all come under the influence of one another and stand in relationships of compatibility (*maitri*) and enmity (*śātrava*, *śatrutā*). Therefore, the metremes do too. Gaurana makes this point explicitly elsewhere in the *Lakṣaṇadīpikā*: "The best sages reckon the affinity and enmity between the metremes according to the affinities and enmities of their presiding planets" (*gaṇānām śatrutāmaitrī vijñeyau munipuṃgavaiḥ tadīśānām grahāṇām ca śatrutvān maitryā sadā*).<sup>40</sup> Thus astrology becomes the fundamental resource for analyzing metrical auspiciousness because it has already described and established the properties of the astrological entities that condition the metremes.

### 3.3. Auspiciousness and poetic authority

All of this so far suggests that Gaurana did not consider all poetic practice to be properly auspicious and authoritative. Were it so, there would be no need for his treatise. Yet despite developing a metaphysical phonetics and prosody rooted in *mantraśāstra* and *jyotiḥśāstra*, Gaurana further argues that only two classes of language users can truly satisfy his poetics of auspiciousness. On the one hand, Gaurana deems authoritative the practice of great poets (*mahākaviprayoga*). On the other, he ultimately maintains that only brahmins are inherently auspicious enough to compose properly auspicious poetry.

On the first account, Gaurana appeals throughout the LD to the practice of great poets as a way of corroborating precepts certified by *śāstra*. But, more strikingly, the practice of great poets can be a precedent in itself. Gaurana's discussion of the *ta*-metreme bears this out:

The [particularities] of the *ta*-metreme [are given] in the *Sāhityaratnākara*:  
Whenever followed by the *bha*-metreme, the *ta*-metreme whose divinity is the Sky, grants every desire for the author and patron.  
For example, it is said in Amaru's poetry: "jyākṛṣṭibaddhakhaṭakāmukha." Now, one might say: No—the *ta*-metreme is intrinsically harmful; so how could it engender any benefit? The reply would be that it bestows good fortune if it is linked with an auspicious meter, just as an onion

39. The identity of this text is not clear to me. As the quotation is not in Prakrit (and elsewhere Gaurana leaves non-Sanskrit quotations untranslated), it does not appear to be identical with the work of the same name by Śaṅkuka. Dating might preclude its being the *Samhitāsāra* of Kṛṣṇa, which Pingree (*Jyotiḥśāstra*, 115–16) identifies as a slightly later revision of the fifteenth-century *Jyotiribandha* of Śūramahātha Śivādāsa.

40. D. 1494 fol. 28b, ll. 3–4.

gains a pleasant fragrance through contact with sandal. Yet—it has been said that there is a flaw in using the *ta*-metreme: “*ta*: the Sky [its divinity], a light syllable at the end, destruction.” And: “For the Sky, void.” But even so, great poets who know the standards of speech have accepted it at the beginning of treatises and among the literary ornaments. Therefore, the *ta*-metreme can only be auspicious. For example: “*astyuttarasyaṃ*” in the *Kumārasaṃbhava*. And Śaṅkarācārya: “*omkārapañjaraśukhīm*.” Furthermore, the treatises also say that the *ta*-metreme is auspicious. In the *Camatkāracandrikā*: “The *ta*-metreme: Sovereignty is its fruit, a light syllable at the end, the Sky its god.” And in the *Sāhityacandrodaya*: “The *ta*-metreme always bestows every blessing.”<sup>41</sup>

What Gaurana points to here is another disagreement within the Andhra school. The *Sāhityaratnākara* holds that the *ta*-metreme is permissible so long as it is followed by the *bha*-metreme. The objection, however, takes issue with the notion that malefic metremes can be made positive. Unexpectedly (given what we have seen so far) Gaurana does not turn to *jyotiḥśāstra*. It may be that the science is useless here: The firmament as such may have little significance for the astrologer; it is primarily the medium in which celestial signs are manifested. Because it was unaddressed, the Andhra poeticsians were free to take up the problem and define some of the sky's properties at their own discretion. But, as the foregoing has shown, Gaurana also believes that poetology lacks a solid theoretical foundation. For this reason he can only look to what “great poets” have done. They are imagined to “know the standards of speech.”

Gaurana never actually explains how this class of great poets is defined, nor does he detail the source of their knowledge. But these great poets are a fairly familiar group which is claimed by Sanskrit literary culture at large. Among them, Kālidāsa, Bhāravi, Māgha, and Śrīharṣa stand out as the authors of the *pañcamahākāvya* or five great Sanskrit poems (*Kumārasaṃbhava* and *Raghuvamśa*; *Kirātārjunīya*; *Śiśupālavadha*; *Naiṣadhacarita* respectively) canonized as such by the fourteenth century.<sup>42</sup> Aside from these major four, Gaurana also cites Bāṇabhaṭṭa and Subandhu, who are frequently included in other lists of great poets and are noteworthy for having set the template for major works of prose poetry. Beyond this standard cast of classical poets, he cites Śaṅkarācārya. We have seen Gaurana cite his authority on linguistic metaphysics through the *Prapañcasāra*; and in the present case, this authority is borne out through his *stotra* composition. Gaurana's move here dovetails with later south Indian representations of Śaṅkara as a poet supreme.<sup>43</sup> Gaurana also has occasion to cite the *maṅgala* verse of Bhāsarvajña's philosophical treatise the *Nyāyasāra*—a surprising choice, though the author is not unknown to Sanskrit literary culture. So, while Gaurana never details the criteria for determining the authority of poets, he nevertheless relies on figures who would have constituted a canon or at least had a broad pedagogical currency.

Even though Gaurana provides no justification for the greatness of those particular poets, he does go on to define the true poet's character in the conclusion to his study on

41. D. 12952 fols. 41, 1. 2–42, 1. 2: *tagaṇasya sāhityaratnākare | nityaṃ bhagaṇasānnidhyāt sarvābhi-  
ṣṭhaphalapradāḥ | kartuḥ kārayituś caiva tagaṇo vyomadaivataḥ | tathā cōktaṃ amarukāvye | jyākṣṭibaddhakhaṭa-  
kāṃmukheti |maivam | prakṛtyā hānidas tagaṇaḥ | kathaṃ śreyaḥ kariṣyati | yadi śubhagaṇayukta[ś] śubhado bhaved  
iti cet | yathā palāṇḍuḥ śrīkhaṇḍayogena ṃ sugandhī bhavet | ṃca tagaṇaprayoge doṣaṃ āha | to dyaur antyalaghuh  
kṣayaṃ iti | gagane śūnyam iti | evaṃ saty api vā vākyapramāṇajñair mahākavibhis tarkagranthādau nānālaṃkāreṣu  
cāṃgikṛtatvāt tagaṇa[ś] śubhada eva | tathā kumārasaṃbhave | astyuttarasyaṃ iti | [parimaḥlakṣṇavijaye dhauryā-  
daparvatasya puṃsa?] iti | mantramahārṇave | omkārapañjaraśukhīm iti | śaṅkarācāryaḥ | kiṃca lakṣaṇagṛaṃtheṣv  
api tagaṇaś śubha ity ucyate | camatkāracandrikāyāṃ | īśatvam antyalaghukas tagaṇo vyomadaivata iti |  
sāhityacandrodaye | tagaṇas sarvasaubhāgyadāyakas sarvadā bhavet iti |*

42. Deven Patel, *Text to Tradition*, 60–62.

43. Elaine M. Fisher, “‘Just Like Kālidāsa,’” 15–16.

auspiciousness. His starting definition comes from the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*: “A man who is pure, clever, calm; who is praised by respectable folk, trained in the arts, learned; who is sweet voiced and expert in poetry; who knows what to do; who knows omens; who is kind, born of a noble clan; whose body is auspicious and who knows the properties of the metres—such a man is a poet” (*kavilakṣaṇaṃ sāhi[tya]cū[ḍāmaṇau] śucir dakṣaḥ śāntas sujanavinutaḥ* [. . .] *kalāvedī vidvān kalamṛduvadaḥ kāvyacaturaḥ kṛtajñō daivajñas sadayas satkulabhavaḥ śubhākaraś chandogaṇaguṇavivekī sa hi kaviḥ*).<sup>44</sup> Excepting extraordinary charisma, martial valor, and romantic prowess, the poet described here resembles the heroic subject or *nāyaka* of poetry and drama.<sup>45</sup> The qualities the manual demands are primarily virtues acquired by education and breeding. Traits gained through education (an acquaintance with omens, knowledge of the arts, poetry, and the metres in particular) shade into qualities conducive to noble comportment, such as the ability to speak in a pleasing manner. Others, like being born into a good family, are ineluctably congenital. Nonetheless, “being born in a good family” could be interpreted variously. In the dramaturgical domain, though the *nāyaka* is most often a kṣatriya, some subtypes are open to vaiśyas and brahmins. So, according to this initial definition, the poet could also come from a vaiśya or kṣatriya background. This theoretical diversity is reinforced by the literary record of Gaurana’s day, which is populated by kingly poets and connoisseurs such as the *Sāhityacūḍāmaṇi*’s author, the Rēḍḍi king Pēḍakomaṭi Vemā, who proudly claimed a *sat-sūdra* identity.<sup>46</sup>

Still, Gaurana did not accept such a diverse class of creators. Most definitions of poets descend from their compositional tendencies rather than social identities,<sup>47</sup> but Gaurana goes on to limit the social composition of the poet class by singling out purity as an essential attribute. He argues: “The word *pure* used at the beginning of the verse means ‘brahman.’ As *Śruti* says: ‘Pure is the brahman, pure is the poet.’ Thus a poet is simply a brahman and not a sūdra, et cetera. . . . Surely, *Śruti* is the exemplar here. [As it is said] in the *Yajurveda*: ‘Pure is the poet’” (*asya padyasyāḍau prayuktena śuciśabdena vipra ucyate | tathā śrutiḥ | śucir vipraś śuciḥ kavir iti | tasmād vipra eva kaviḥ | na tu śūdrādayaḥ | tathā hi | na śūdro na ca vaiśyas tu na narendraḥ kadācana | vipra eva kavir nūnam atrodāharaṇaṃ śrutiḥ | yajusi | śuciḥ kavir iti* ||).<sup>48</sup> Thus purity (*śucitā*) is made synonymous with brahmanhood. With such an equation, Gaurana’s *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* moves from a study on auspiciousness toward making broader social arguments about auspiciousness and poetic authority: Poetry must be auspicious and unsullied. Purity is the basis of auspiciousness here. In addition to the purity and auspiciousness of the language stuff (as reckoned by *mantraśāstra* and *jyotiḥśāstra*), the poet’s own purity (or lack thereof) inheres in the poet’s work. Only a brahman, it would seem, is vested with the requisite purity says Gaurana’s Vedic citation. Thus comes Gaurana’s final recommendation that “the poetry of non-brahmins—of sūdras and their like—should be repulsive, just like milk from a dog” (*śunidugdhaṃ yathā tyājyaṃ*

44. D. 1494 fol. 30a, ll. 3–5.

45. Compare the core qualities of the *nāyaka* described in a text likely known to Gaurana, Siṅgabhūpāla’s *Rasārṇavasudhākara* 1.61–63: “. . . The hero is male and full of good qualities. His qualities are magnanimity, nobility, steadfastness, cleverness, radiance, and righteousness; further, he is well-born, well-spoken, grateful, modest, pure, composed, charismatic, artistic, and pleasing to people. The learned have taught that these are the universal qualities of the hero” (. . . *nāyako guṇavān pumān | tadguṇās tu mahābhāgyam audāryaṃ sthairyadakṣate || aujvalyaṃ dhārmikatvaṃ ca kulīnatvaṃ ca vāgmitā | kṛtajñatvaṃ nayajñatvaṃ śucitā mānaśālītā || tejasvitā kalāvātvaṃ prajārañjakatādayaḥ | ete sādharmaṇāḥ proktāḥ nāyakasya guṇā budhaiḥ ||*).

46. Vāmanabhaṭṭaśāṇa, *Vemabhūpālacarita*, 3. For more on *sat-sūdras* see Theodore Benke, “The Śūdrā-cāraśiromaṇi of Kṛṣṇa Śeṣa.”

47. See, for example, the seven types enumerated in *Alaṅkārasaṅgraha* 2.1–6.

48. D. 12952 fol. 34, ll. 9–15.

*padyaṃ sūdrakṛtaṃ budhaiḥ gavām iva payo tathā kāvyaṃ vipreṇa nirmitaṃ*).<sup>49</sup> In the end, just as the stuff of language has powers that transcend its semantic capabilities, so, too, does the poet have a certain metaphysical constitution. Yet, where the properties of phonemes and metremes may be attenuated or exacerbated, it is not so for the would-be poet. According to Gaurana, there is simply no procedure whereby poets can modulate the metaphysical consequences of their caste.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In this way Gaurana's *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* argues for a new standard of authority in poetics. Treatises on poetics can hold valid opinions in decidedly poetological matters (such as the technical terms for the metremes and the very necessity of analyzing poetry's auspiciousness). However, Gaurana generally finds poetics to be an unstable body of knowledge with many internal contradictions. Therefore, when it touches topics that are not strictly literary and when poetic manuals disagree, authority must shift elsewhere—to *mantraśāstra* when it comes to the metaphysics of phonemes and to *jyotiḥśāstra* for the metremes' astrological properties. Gaurana does not go so far as to justify the authority of these texts, which likely stood as self-evidently authoritative *śāstras* in his eyes. On the other hand, what was neither self-evident nor unassailable was the validity of poetics.

So a new rigor would have been essential, given the stakes of the poetics of auspiciousness. Gaurana makes this clear with the alarmist way in which he frames the *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* project. The knowledge it contains is a matter of prosperity or destitution, of life and death. In this light Gaurana's work in the *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* is driven by an anxiety about the power of poetry and the power of poets themselves. The titles of the few other similarly focused works from the tradition echo this need for poetic regulation. They label poets as beasts to be reined in with the anonymous *Kavikaṇṭhapāśa* (*Leash for the Poet's Throat*), or wild elephants to be prodded and tamed with the *Kavigajāṅkuṣamu* (*Goad for Poet-Elephants*) by Gaurana's son Bhairavakavi, or an invasive species of serpents to be kept in check by their raptorial natural predator in the *Kavisarpaḡāruḡamu* (*An Eagle to Poet-Snakes*). In being fashioned to counter poetic dangers, these texts resonate with stories of medieval south Indian poets, such as Vemulavāḡa Bhīmakavi, who routinely cursed kings with his malefic compositions.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, the central force behind the Andhra school's development may have been the poeticians' anxiety over poetry's power, especially when it is used to celebrate royal power. In her study of Tamil *pāṭṭiyals* Jennifer Clare has highlighted this courtly cause by detailing the complete coequality of their similar phoneme analysis and the description of specifically Tamil genres of *pirapantam* panegyric. Seen against the backdrop of earlier Tamil poetics, she argues, the coincidence of these two subjects in the *pāṭṭiyal* suggests that the function of Tamil poetry was generally reoriented towards the praise of royal patrons. In this regard, she understands the *pāṭṭiyals* as a project meant to demonstrate Tamil's capacity to express royal power.<sup>51</sup>

The connection between the Tamil and Andhra materials remains to be discerned, and I would hesitate to follow the *pāṭṭiyal* parallel too closely, given its focus on Tamil as such. Even as it speaks to Telugu materials, the Andhra school exemplified by Gaurana was first formulated in Sanskrit, and royal panegyric had long been at the core of Sanskrit traditions of

49. D. 1494 fol. 30a, l. 5.

50. Velcheru Narayana Rao, "Multiple Lives of a Text: The *Sumati Śatakamu* in Colonial Andhra," 353–54.

51. Jennifer Steele Clare, "Canons, Conventions, and Creativity," 79.

*kāvya*.<sup>52</sup> Alongside the massive and related literature of *stotra*, both went largely untheorized in Sanskrit poetics.<sup>53</sup> So, given the genre's practical centrality and its virtual absence from theoretical discussions in *alaṃkāraśāstra*, the Andhra poeticians must have found something new worth defining. And what they found were not just panegyrics, but *cāṭuprabandhas* with an explicitly metaphysical form and function.

In this light, we must certainly grapple with Mundoli Narayanan's admonition against "over-ritualizing" artistic activity in premodern India.<sup>54</sup> But in developing a poetics of auspiciousness, the Andhra poeticians' project was intent on reading panegyric as beholden to standards associated with ritual practice. This was particularly true for the *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* as it situated poetics against canons of knowledge necessary for ritual. But even more for Gaurana, refining the poetics of auspiciousness also demanded redefining poetic authority. Poeticians and patrons did not only need to verify that practice was auspicious in light of *śāstras*, *tantras*, and the precedents set by great poets of the past. They also had to consider the auspiciousness and authority of the composer himself. And so, in producing an image of the poet that naturalizes the coincidence of poethood, brahmanhood, and purity, Gaurana's definition of the poet is not so much pure description as it is his argument's prescriptive culmination: Redescribing poetic work as a ritual activity wherein auspiciousness is paramount, the *Lakṣaṇadīpikā* urges patrons to seek praise from only a brahman few. By the same token, such an argument's presence reminds us that the class of real poets must have been much more expansive than Gaurana would have liked to admit.

52. Pollock, *Language of the Gods*, 70–74. See also Stephanie Jamison, "Poetry: kauuvi, kavi, kāvya," 146–47.

53. Yigal Bronner, "Singing to God, Educating the People," 114–15.

54. Mundoli Narayanan, "Over-Ritualization of Performance."

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